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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 000165

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TAGS: PREL PTER PHUM MEPP CH IS

SUBJECT: PRC SPECIAL ENVOY LAYS OUT POSITION ON GAZA,  
STRESSES NEED FOR PALESTINIAN STATE, DERIDES HAMAS

REF: EAP/CM-EMBASSY EMAIL 1/20/09

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Political Affairs Aubrey Carlson.  
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: China's Special Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process Ambassador Sun Bigan described for PolMinCouns January 20 the five principles that China believes are necessary for progress in the Middle East Peace Process in light of the current situation in Gaza. In addition to calling for a ceasefire and allowing provision of humanitarian assistance, Sun stressed the importance of comprehensive negotiations that lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. He said that Hamas' "reasoning" is not helpful but that Hamas' presence is a "reality" that must be considered. Sun expressed concern over the monitoring and implementation of a ceasefire but added that China welcomes Egyptian efforts at mediation as well as U.S. engagement on the issue. PolMinCouns told Sun that the United States welcomes China's diplomatic engagement and appreciates the humanitarian assistance China has provided. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) China's Special Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process Ambassador Sun Bigan briefed PolMinCouns January 20 on his January 12-15 trip to the Middle East where he met with Egyptian, Arab League, Israeli and Palestinian leaders to discuss the crisis in Gaza. He said the purpose of his trip was to deepen China's understanding of developments in Gaza and the Middle East Peace Process, present the Chinese position on the crisis and promote the peaceful resolution of the issues through dialogue.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Sun said that the Chinese Government was monitoring developments in the Middle East closely and was very concerned about the situation, a concern reflected in recent telephone discussions on the issue between President Hu and President Bush and between Foreign Minister Yang and Secretary Rice.

¶4. (C) Sun reported that while in Egypt, he met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit, Intelligence Chief Omar Suliman and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa. In Israel, he met with Israeli President Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and in the Palestinian Territories with Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas as well as the PA Minister for Social Affairs. He said he did not meet with representatives of Hamas.

¶5. (C) Sun presented the five major points of China's position on the current situation in the Middle East, stressing that these points did not constitute a new position but rather a continuation of previous policy:

-- China calls on all parties concerned to abide by UNSC Resolution 1860 and implement a cease-fire immediately.

-- Measures should be taken to ease the humanitarian crisis

in Gaza. A stable channel for supply of aid, including food, medicine and fuel, should be opened as soon as possible, and all parties concerned should provide the necessary guarantees for this channel.

-- The parties concerned should establish, through negotiation, a ceasefire monitoring mechanism in Gaza and work to create durable security and stability there.

-- The Palestine-Israel peace talks should resume as soon as possible, and efforts should be made to seek the resolution of issues related to the final status of Palestine on the basis of mutual trust, so that an independent Palestinian state can be established as early as possible, with the two states co-existing peacefully.

-- The international community should increase mediation efforts for peace and promote a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the Middle East issue. China is ready to work with the parties concerned and make unremitting efforts in this regard.

¶6. (C) Asked China's position on Hamas, Sun said that the existence of Hamas in Gaza was a "reality" that had to be considered, but added that Hamas' "reasoning" was unhelpful. He stressed the need for Palestinian Authority President Abbas to act as the leader for all Palestinian territories. Sun said that China called on Hamas to renounce violence and enter into dialogue with Israel and other relevant parties to resolve the current crisis. He said the Hamas issue could not be solved by force. He wondered how the current ceasefire would be monitored and if oversight would be

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sufficient.

¶7. (C) Sun stressed that the "most fundamental" resolution to the Middle East issue had to come through negotiation that leads to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Such negotiations would require the action and support of the UN and the Arab League. He added that the role of the United States in this process would be critical and that China hoped to coordinate with the United States on the issue. Sun welcomed statements that the United States would continue to address the Mid-East situation. Sun noted that China welcomed and supported Egypt's efforts to mediate in the crisis.

¶8. (C) Drawing on ref email points, PolMinCouns told Ambassador Sun that the United States welcomed China's diplomatic engagement in the region and China's contribution of humanitarian assistance. He told Sun that the United States condemned Hamas attacks against civilians and held Hamas fully responsible for the renewal of violence. He made clear that the United States actively supported the mediation efforts of Egypt and encouraged China to likewise support efforts that lead to a durable ceasefire and sustainable peace in Gaza.

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